



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

August 11, 2000

### **H.R. 2883** **Child Citizenship Act of 2000**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on the Judiciary on July 26, 2000*

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 2883 would have no significant net effect on the federal budget. Because the legislation would affect direct spending, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply. However, we estimate that the additional spending from enacting this legislation would be less than \$500,000 a year. H.R. 2883 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, but it could result in a very small increase in the state share of benefits paid under certain federal entitlement programs.

H.R. 2883 would grant automatic U.S. citizenship to certain foreign-born children under the age of 18 who become permanent U.S. residents. In order to qualify, one of the child's parents would have to be a citizen and meet certain U.S. residence requirements. Under current law, such children may choose to become citizens by filing an application with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) for a certificate of citizenship and paying a \$160 fee (the fee is \$125 for children adopted overseas).

In fiscal year 1999, CBO estimates that INS collected several million dollars in citizenship fees for foreign-born children and spent roughly the same amount for related administrative costs. Under H.R. 2883, it is not clear how the provision of automatic citizenship would be documented or whether these children would need or desire a certificate of citizenship. CBO expects that fewer children would apply for certificates of citizenship if the bill is enacted, because certificates would no longer be necessary to obtain citizenship. Thus, we estimate that enacting H.R. 2883 would reduce both fee collections and spending by the INS. The resulting net effect on outlays would be negligible.

Because enacting H.R. 2883 would automatically grant citizenship to certain foreign-born children of U.S. citizens, some of these children could receive certain public benefits for which they would not have been eligible as legal permanent residents. CBO estimates that direct spending on benefits for such children would increase by less than \$500,000 a year.

On November 4, 1999, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for S. 1485, the Adopted Orphans Citizenship Act, as passed by the Senate on October 26, 1999. That legislation is similar to H.R. 2883 but applied only to certain foreign-born children who are adopted. CBO estimated that the net effect on the federal budget would be insignificant.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Mark Grabowicz. This estimate was approved by Robert A. Sunshine, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.